

March/April 2012

American Girl

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Aubre Andrus, Kitson Jazyntka

MARKETING MANAGERS
D'Ann Jackson, Shawn Niebeling
SENIOR CIRCULATION COORDINATOR
Heather Hempel Gomez

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Jane Amini, Patti Kelley Criswell, Meagan Eggers, Kerry Galbraith,
Virginia Gunderson, Karey Humphrey, Judith Lary, Travis Mancil,
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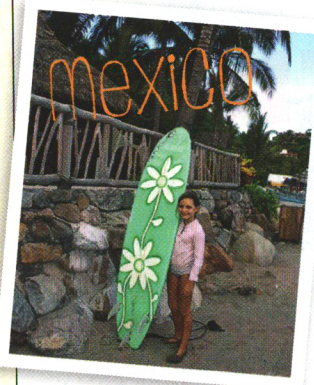
Contents

Follow Your Inner Star®

Girls Express 2

Contest 8
Bright Kites

You Said It! 10
I have good luck when I...



American
Girls Around
the World,
page 12

france
tanzania
switzerland

American Girls
Around the World 12

Here's How 16
Start a Business

She's So Cool—And
So Are You! 18

Quiz, page 22



Quiz 22
Too-Cool Schools

Craft 24
Easter Egg-stravaganza

Stick to It,
page 26



Stick to It 26

The Truth Club 32

Doll Fun 40
Let It Rain!

AG's Puzzle Page 42

Posters 43

Help! 45

Behind the Scenes ... 48

Plus AG's Pint-Sized Posters



Safety first!

Some of our projects and activities require an adult's help.

When you see this symbol, be sure to ask an adult to work with you.

Girls

E X P R E S S

Coco-Cuties

Make quick chicks and funny bunnies from just a few ingredients.

1. Cover work space in wax paper, and wash your hands. Use a fork to mix $\frac{3}{4}$ cup **shredded coconut**, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup **powdered sugar**, and 2 tablespoons **condensed milk**. Split the mixture between two bowls, and stir in a few drops of **food coloring**—different colors for bunnies and chicks.
2. Form 6 small ovals of one color for bunnies. With the other color, make chicks by rolling 6 small balls for the bodies and pressing on smaller balls for the heads. Add **chewy candy beaks** and **sliced almond ears**. Push in **long sprinkles** for eyes and bunny noses.
3. To make grass, put $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **coconut** and 2 drops **green food coloring** into a plastic zipper bag and seal. Shake to mix. Spread a little **condensed milk** on top of 12 **mini peanut butter cups**. Sprinkle on green coconut, and add chicks and bunnies. Happy spring!



Use tiny candies to make a basket!

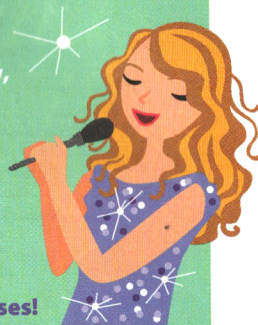
Meet an AG Reader

Valerie B.
Age 11, Ohio



I live with my mom, dad, brother, and turtle. (My turtle's name is Peter.)

At my dream birthday party, my best friends and I would go to a Taylor Swift concert—and we'd have backstage passes!



My proudest moment: That was the day that my pottery teacher told me that I have "potter's hands" and that I should enter a piece in the art show.

My favorite spot in my home: That would be the art studio that my dad built for me in the garage.

My favorite snack: I love puppy chow—you know, when you coat cereal in melted chocolate, peanut butter, and powdered sugar?

In 20 years, I'll be an art teacher.

My favorite part of AG: The crafts, of course—I love arts and crafts!

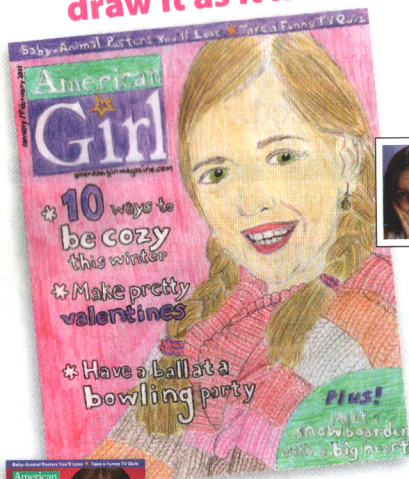
Introduce Yourself!

To find out how to be a featured reader, go to americangirl.com/playmagazine

draw it as it is.

AG Art Gallery

How will you draw your AG cover?
You can...



Megar A.
Age 12, Colorado



monster-ize it.



Kyla P.
Age 10, Maryland



turn it into a comic.

3 Fun Quizzes • 50 adorable stickers



Elena H.
Age 12, Washington

make it a self-portrait.



Lianna M.
Age 11, New York

Monster-ize your favorite AG cover and mail it to the address on page 7! Some artwork will appear in our September/October issue.

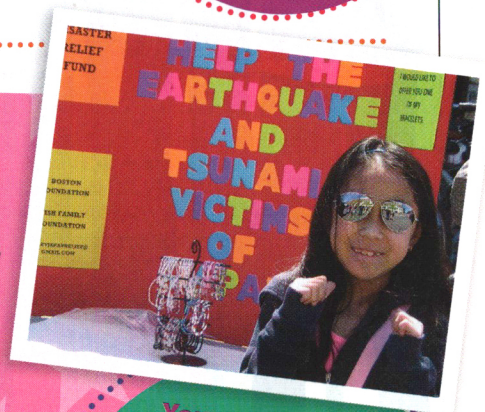
Shining Star

When Haley K. heard the news about victims in Japan who had lost family members and homes during a devastating tsunami, she knew that she wanted to help. "I had gotten into making jewelry," Haley explains. "So I decided to make bracelets as a token of thanks for people who donated money."

Haley, her parents, her brother, and her friends made more than 500 colorful beaded bracelets. Each one had a red bead in the center to symbolize Japan's flag and hope for the victims. Haley got donations

from neighbors, school friends, dancers at her studio, and many others. The bracelets helped Haley raise more than \$4,000 for tsunami victims.

"Before this experience, I didn't know how to help out in a crisis," says the Massachusetts nine-year-old, who gave all the money to a tsunami relief group that helped victims with medical care and other needs. "The best part was hearing how the money was used to help victims in Japan," Haley says. "I loved helping to make a difference."



You can shine, too.

Make your own bracelets to sell in support of any cause that's important to you. String beads onto elastic cording big enough to fit a wrist, tie a double knot, and trim the long ends of the cord. You also can design a tag describing how you'll donate the money.

Closet Confidential

With winter ending and spring coming, now is a great time to clean out your closet. Use our tips to organize what you have and figure out what you need.

Pick a Spot

Organizing a closet is a big job, so start small. Plan to do the floor, your shoe bin, or one big shelf at a time—not all at once.

See It All

Take everything out of the space you chose so that you can see what you have. Try each item on to make sure it still fits and that you still like it.


Stay or Go?

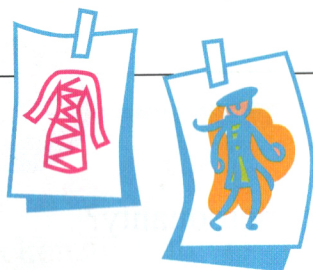
Make three spots for your stuff: a Keep pile, a Donate box, and a Toss heap. Decide what to do with each item.

Keep: Items that you like, that fit, and that are in good shape

Donate: Items that are too small or not your style but are still in good shape. Send them to a charity, or sell them at a yard sale.

Toss: Items that are in bad shape and that no one should wear

 Make sure to check with a parent before you donate or throw away any items.



Get Inspired

Find pictures of outfits you love in magazines. Make a collage from the pictures, and hang it in your closet, where you'll see it when you're picking out clothes. Happy dressing!



Organize

Now it's time to put your stuff away. An organized closet will help you get out the door faster in the mornings. Find things easily by giving everything its own spot.



Socks

Hairclips

Headbands

Hang by subject:
Put all of your shirts together, your pants, your tops, and so on. When you're putting laundry away, keep the same system.

Use baskets: Toss hair accessories, underwear, and socks into labeled baskets.

Tame your shoes:
Stack shoes on low shelves, store them in small bins, or try an over-the-door shoe organizer.

School shoes

Dress shoes

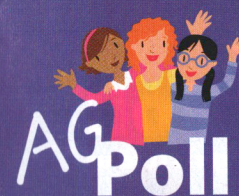
Creative Corner



Owl Pals



Cut out card. Flip over for directions.



AG Poll

Answer these questions, and then turn the page to see how your answers compare to those of other AG readers.

If I were a bird, I'd be a

- * flamingo
- * owl
- * peacock
- * parrot

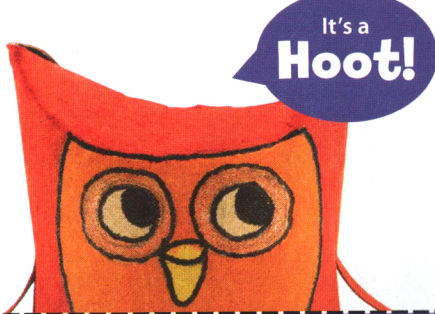
I feel most creative when I

- * decorate my room
- * draw or paint
- * take pictures
- * sing in the shower



Owl Pals

Turn an everyday object into an adorable animal. On one end of an **empty toilet-paper roll**, press the sides together until they meet, forming two points. Use a **pencil** to sketch an owl. Go over the pencil lines with a **thin black marker**, and then color. Snip wings, and fold them out from the body.



Photos: Radlund Photography

AG Poll

What girls told us



Birds girls would be:

30%
parrot

25%
peacock

23%
owl

22%
flamingo

I feel most creative when I

47%
draw or paint

25%
decorate my room

15%
take pictures

13%
sing in the shower

To answer our weekly poll question, go to
americangirl.com/playmagazine

Slicker Pick

Which raincoat matches your personality?
Take our quiz to find out.

1. At a slumber party, you'd most likely be wearing:



2. On a field trip to the art museum, you'd be the girl who is...

- a. exploring, finding cool artworks that no one else notices.
- b. memorizing the colors in the prettiest painting.
- c. first to the top of the beautiful marble steps out front.

3. At your lunch table, you're the girl most likely to be...

- a. giving advice to a friend.
- b. using a lunch bag you decorated yourself.
- c. making plans to play at the park that weekend.

4. Which folder would be yours?



5. When a sign-up sheet goes up at school, you'd put your name down for...

- a. the safety patrol.
- b. the fashion-design club.
- c. the hula-hoop club.



True Story

Mackenzie wanted to remember her dad in a very sweet way.

Dear American Girl,

Even when my dad was on duty in Iraq, we shared something that we loved: Girl Scout Cookies. I would send him cookies (he loved the Peanut Butter Sandwiches), and he would send me pictures of himself eating them. My daddy was killed in Iraq. But I wanted to keep sending cookies to other soldiers in Iraq to help them remember home. So when my Brownie troop sold cookies last year, I asked people to contribute boxes for soldiers overseas.

Collecting orders for 650 boxes of cookies took a lot of walking in the cold and introducing myself, but it made me feel good. I put a note on each box that told about my dad, and I made a plan with the Girl Scouts to get the cookies sent to the troops.

One day a surprise package arrived for me. I got a video message from the boss of the Air Force thanking me and telling me that I was patriotic and generous. I also got a flag, pictures, and special coins. Doing good things for others makes me happy. I'll keep sending cookies to soldiers who are far away from their families for as long as I can.

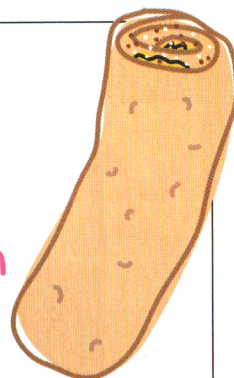
Sincerely,

Mackenzie F.
Age 8, Wisconsin

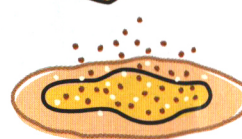


Quick Snack

Cinnamon Grande



Spread a thin layer of **butter** on a **tortilla**.



Sprinkle with **cinnamon** and **sugar**.

★ Ask a parent to microwave the tortilla until warm.



Grace R.
Age 12, Washington



Send your yummy—and **easy**—recipes to the address below.

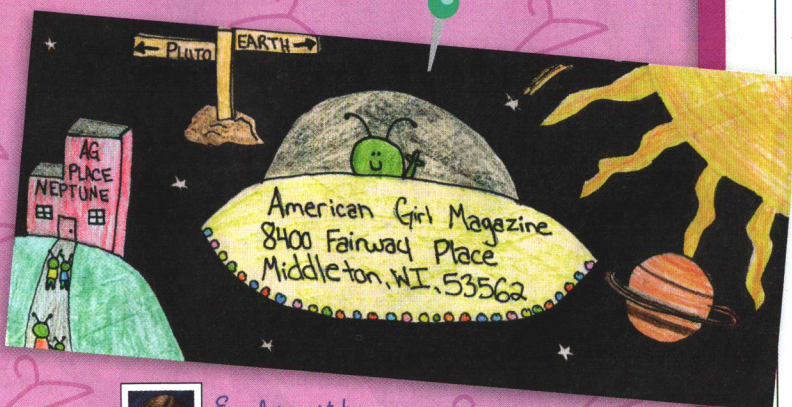
Write to Us

Be sure to include your

- * First and last name
- * Address and phone number
- * Birth date, including year
- * School photo or other portrait
- * Parent's signature

Send us a cool envelope! Print our address neatly on the front and your return address on the back.

We can't print every letter, but we read everything you send to us. Hope to hear from you soon! ★



Envelope art by
Genna G.
Age 13, Colorado



Bright Kites

The sky is full of colorful, cute, and creative kites made by girls like you!

Star Flight



Carly Y.
Age 10, Washington



Carnival Kite



Dana G.
Age 12, California



Dragon Fly



Nicole R.
Age 11, Arizona



Flying Colors



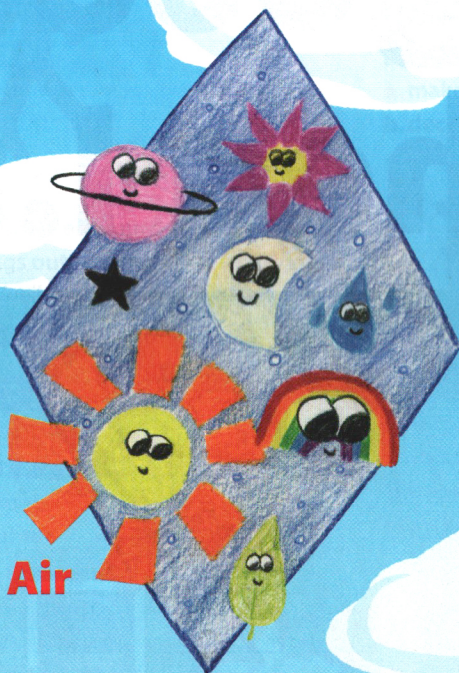
Jenna K.
Age 12, California



Windy Wings



Natalia F.
Age 12, Indiana



Science Air



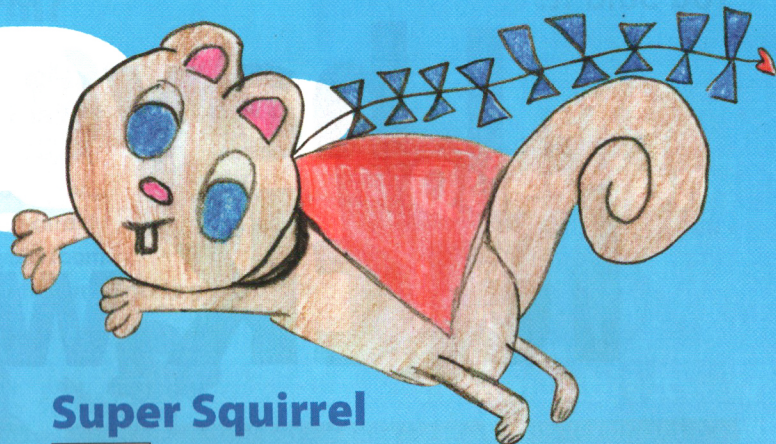
Hannah B.
Age 11, Connecticut



Sugar Glider



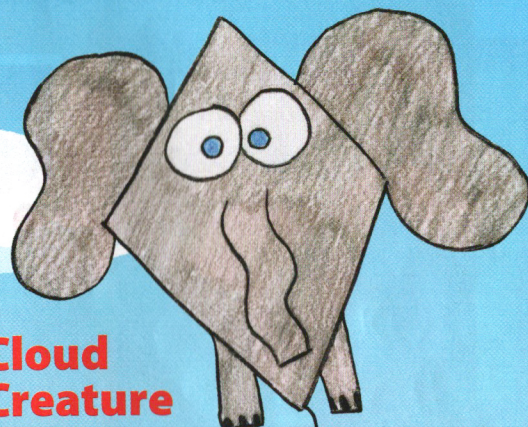
Danika D.
Age 9, California



Super Squirrel



Felicia H.
Age 11, Maryland



Cloud Creature



Daniella S.
Age 11, Canada



New Contest: School Outfits

If you could design a dream outfit for the first day of school, what would you wear? Maybe you'd pair a funny T-shirt with a cool pair of jeans. Or perhaps you'd wear a one-of-a-kind dress with jeweled ballet flats. Send a drawing of your outfit to the address on page 7, along with your first and last name, address, school or portrait-style photo, and birth date. Postmark deadline: April 10, 2012. Winners will appear in the September/October 2012 issue. Sorry—we can't return entries. ★

I have good luck when I...

play with my dog, **Ginger,**
before a basketball game.



Gretchen T.
Age 11, Ohio

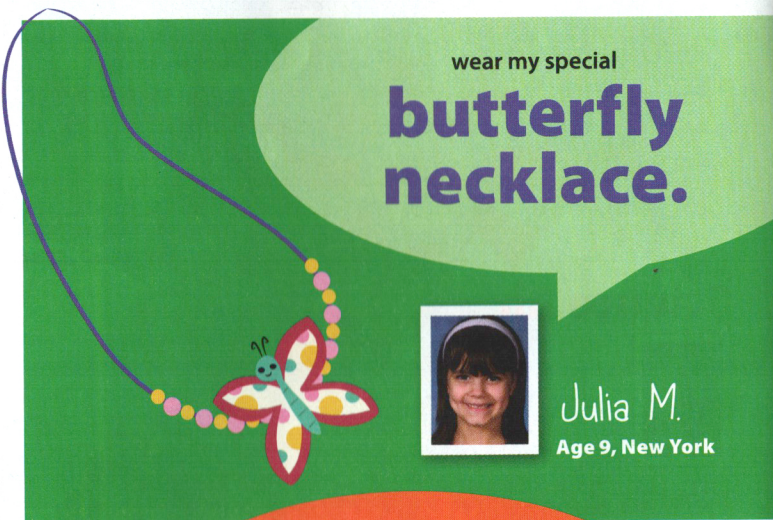


wear my special

**butterfly
necklace.**



Julia M.
Age 9, New York

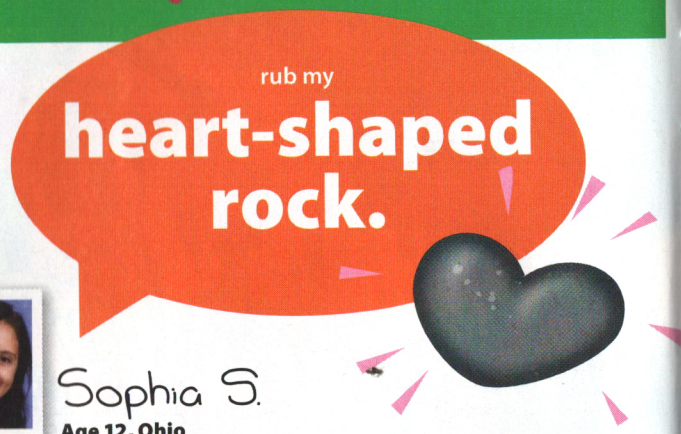
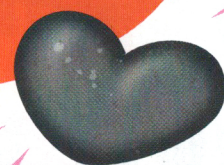


rub my

**heart-shaped
rock.**



Sophia S.
Age 12, Ohio



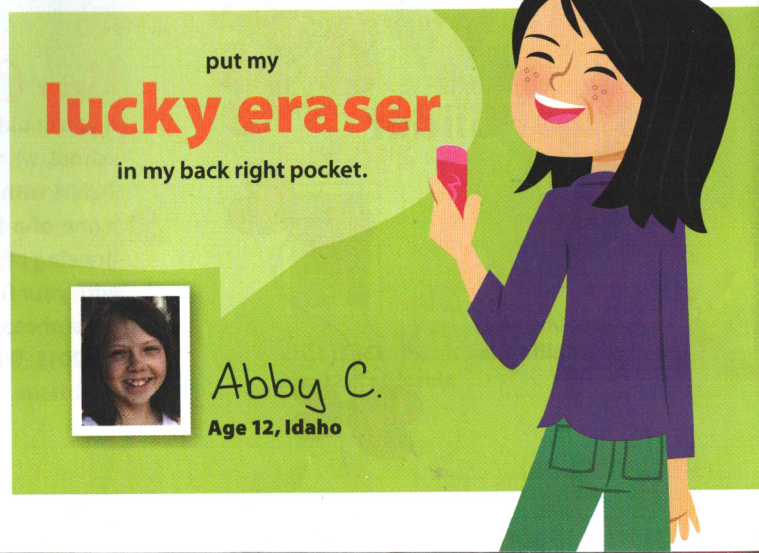
put my

lucky eraser

in my back right pocket.



Abby C.
Age 12, Idaho



Alex W.
Age 11, Michigan

use a
**light blue
bat**

at a softball game.



What's your lucky charm?

Take this quiz to find out what might bring you luck!



1. If you feel stressed, you...
- a. talk things out.
 - b. go for a walk outdoors.
 - c. organize your room.

2. When you prepare for a test, you need to have...
- a. a study buddy.
 - b. a quiet space.
 - c. a highlighter.



3. When you get excited about a holiday, you...
- a. make lots of cards.
 - b. decorate your room.
 - c. think of perfect presents to give.



4. In a mall, you can be found...
- a. shopping with your mom.
 - b. people-watching in the food court.
 - c. searching for a new bracelet to add to your collection.

Answers

Mostly a's:

Person

When you're nervous about taking a big test or singing a solo, lean on family and friends for support. A few comforting words can make you feel like one lucky girl.

Mostly b's:

Place

Do you feel down on your luck? Go to a place where you can think positive thoughts, such as a dog park, a friend's house, or an art museum.

Mostly c's:

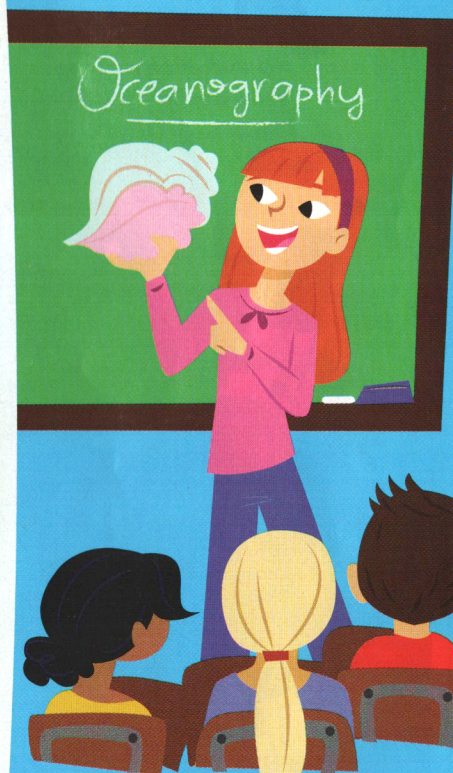
Thing

For an extra boost of lucky feelings, wear a pair of colorful socks, hug a stuffed animal, or carry a penny in your pocket.

Remember—charms can make you feel lucky, but you are the one who creates your own luck!

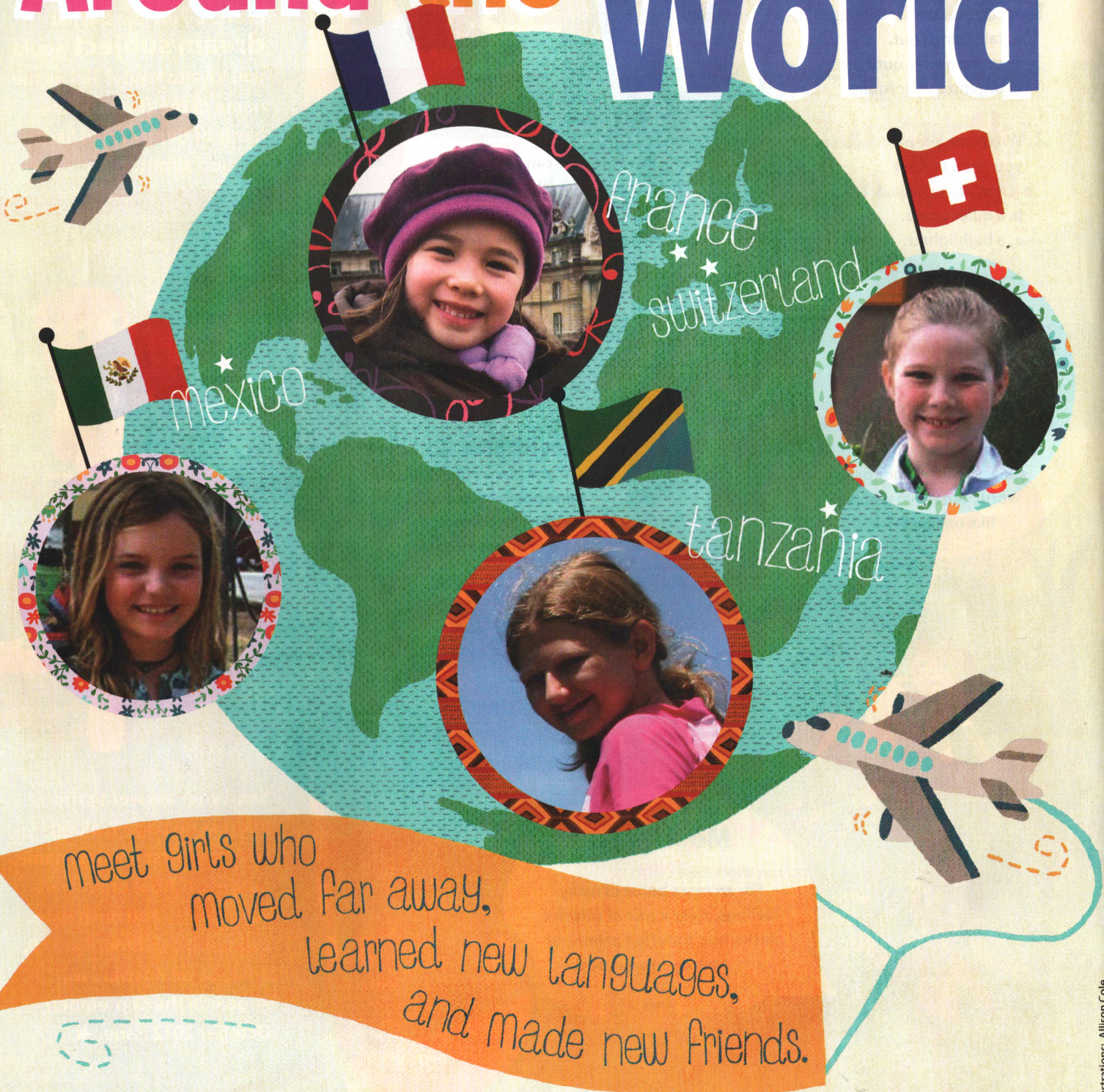
Next Question!

Pretend that your school principal has asked you to create a new class. What **dream subject** would you love to study? Tell us the name of the class and the kinds of things you'd like to learn about.



Send your answer to the address on page 7, along with your first and last name, address, school or portrait-style photo, and birth date. Postmark deadline: April 10, 2012. Some answers will appear in the September/October 2012 issue. ★

American Girls Around the World



meet girls who
moved far away,
learned new languages,
and made new friends.

At home in mexico

Name: Devon, age 11

Originally from: California (and just moved back there)

Why I loved living abroad:

I lived in a surfing town, and now I'm a full-on surfer.

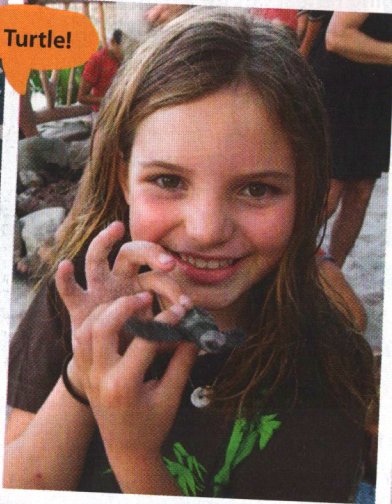
We even started a surf club after school on Wednesdays. Also, I became fluent in Spanish.



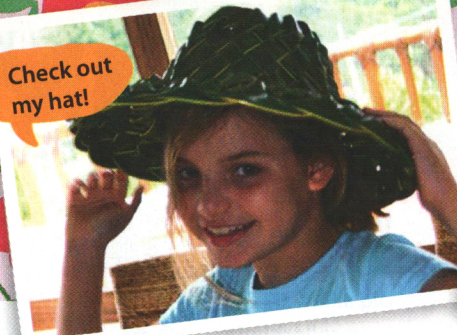
What school was like: Half of our day was in English, and the other half was in Spanish. My school was a "green" school that focused on what we could do to help our community and our oceans.



Turtle!



Check out my hat!

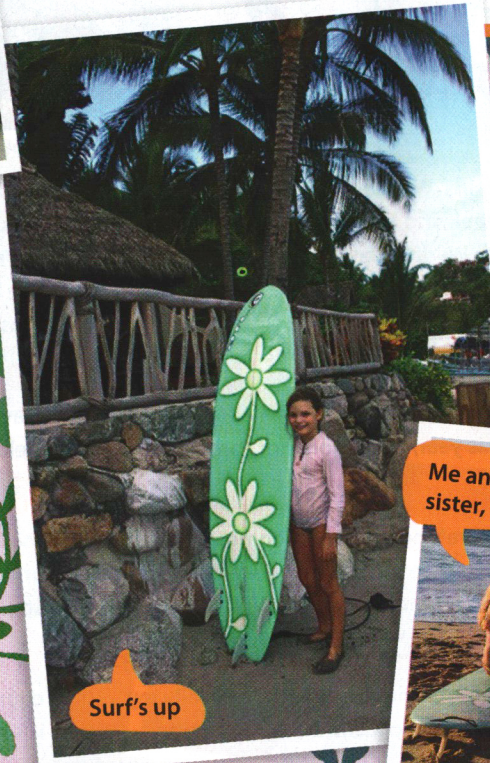


What was different: Our school backed up to a river, so we picked up garbage. We did a lot of beach cleanup and made sure all of the animals were fine.

What was hard about living there: It was hard to adjust to school and to learn Spanish. On the first day of school, I came home to my mom crying because I couldn't understand a word of it.

What I missed most: At first, I missed all my friends. I e-mailed them and was pen pals with some friends, too.

Interesting fact: There's so much underwater wildlife there. I loved snorkeling at the nearby islands. Where I live in California, the water is freezing, so to be in the warm water in Mexico was great.



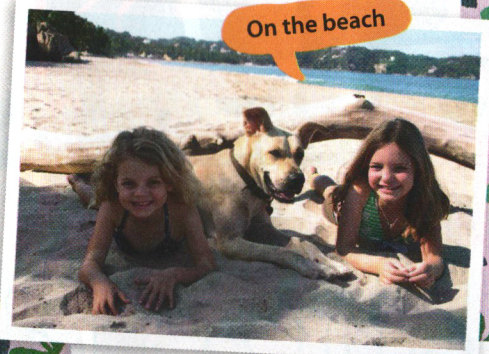
Surf's up

Where else I've traveled: We've traveled all around Mexico. I love to go to different places around the world because it helps me to learn about different cultures.

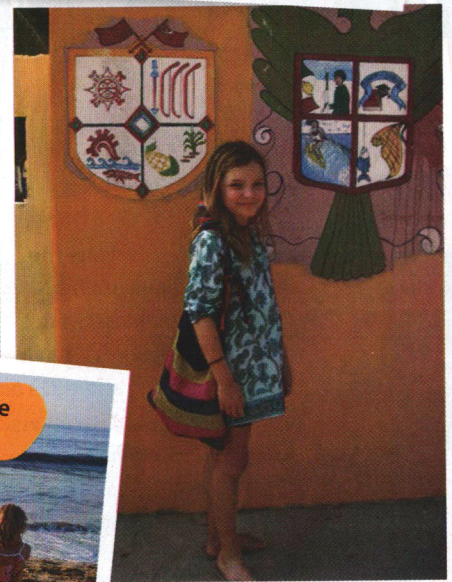
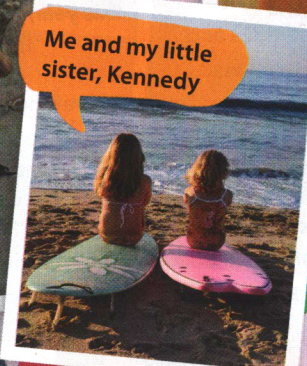
Funny story: Sometimes I'd go to a snack stand and order ice pops and ice cream just to practice my Spanish.

What I've learned: Don't judge a book by its cover. I thought, *How am I ever going to fit in?* But after a while I thought, *Why did I even think that?* *This place is pretty cool. Give it a chance.*

On the beach



Me and my little sister, Kennedy





At home in France

Name: Colette, age 8

Originally from: Minnesota

Why I love living abroad: I like the big sidewalks so that I can rollerblade.

On Sundays, my family and I go to the Eiffel Tower and meet up with a bunch of people who rollerblade around the city.



What school is like: There are no school buses, so my little sister Isabel and I walk with our neighbors. I'm in French school. I learn French history, and I have English class, too, which is easy for me!

What is different: We have a two-hour lunch break. Sometimes we eat at our cafeteria, and sometimes we go home.

What's hard about living here: After speaking English with my family during my summer vacation, it's hard to go back to French at school.

What I miss most: My family—my grandpas and grandmas and cousins

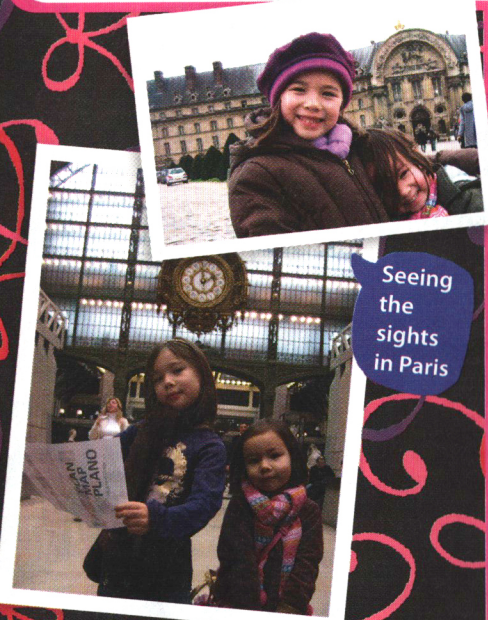
Interesting fact: Visit the Arc de Triomphe and climb to the top. You can see all of Paris, and it's a really nice view.

Where else I've traveled: I've been to the south of France, Hawaii, and Korea.

Funny story: I stay in touch with my cousins by playing computer games together!

What I've learned: On long plane rides, I bring a huge backpack with books and school things. Sometimes we sleep on the plane or watch movies and listen to music.

Seeing the sights in Paris



At home in Switzerland

Name: Julia, age 9

Originally from: Indiana

Why I love living abroad: I like the festivals, such as

Herbstmesse, a fall festival with Ferris wheels and rides and games. There's also *Fasnacht*, where

people dress up, parade around, and throw candy and confetti.

What school is like: We don't have school buses, so most people walk to school or take trams, which are like

trains. We speak German half the week and English the other half. On Wednesdays, we get out at noon.

What is different: At school, we take a lot more field trips. We take an overnight trip at the end of the year from second grade on. At the end of this year, I'll be gone for three nights.

What's hard about living here: There's no air-conditioning. It gets super hot some days. We open the windows and the doors and use fans.

What I miss most: I miss my grandparents and my family, especially my new baby cousin. She's really cute.

Interesting fact: The girls in my ballet class all speak different languages, so when we're doing rehearsals for a dance recital, the teacher shouts in all different languages. I just wait for the English.

Where else I've traveled: We get to travel to lots of cool places such as France, Ireland, Italy, Czech Republic, and Spain.

Funny story: Sometimes I teach my mom German! Once we went to a store and the store clerk was asking my mom some questions. I answered them for her.

What I've learned: It takes a lot of courage to move somewhere new, but it's really worth it and super fun.

My siblings and me

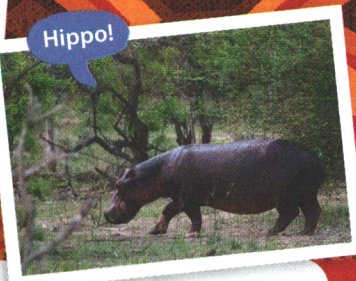


At home in

tanzania



Hippo!



Name: Isabel, age 12

Originally from: Maryland

Why I love living abroad: In America, I wouldn't be able to go on a safari or go on a field trip to an island off Tanzania.

What school is like: I have a carpool with my friends. I take Spanish and swimming, and in school there's a lot of history based around Africa.

What is different: I have to sleep under a mosquito net at night.



What's hard about living here:

Sometimes the power is *rationed*, which means that it's limited. And sometimes the power just doesn't come on. At home, we have a generator that creates electricity in case my mom needs to cook using a microwave or if we need a light.

What I miss most: I go back to the United States every summer to visit, and I like all the fruits—especially blueberries and peaches, which I really love—and all the big stores.

Interesting fact: Our house came with two tortoises, Mr. and Mrs. Tortoise, who had been here since the first owner. We have a rooster, Lucky, and a hen, Luna, who had a chick we named Midnight. We also have a dog, Cinta, and a cat, Ginger.

Where else I've traveled: I have been to Cairo, Egypt, where I saw the pyramids and the Sphinx. It was really cool! I've also visited Italy, England, and South Africa.

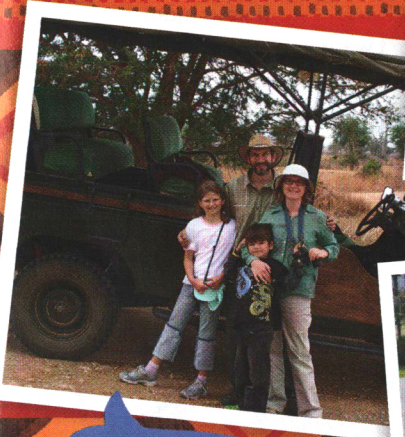
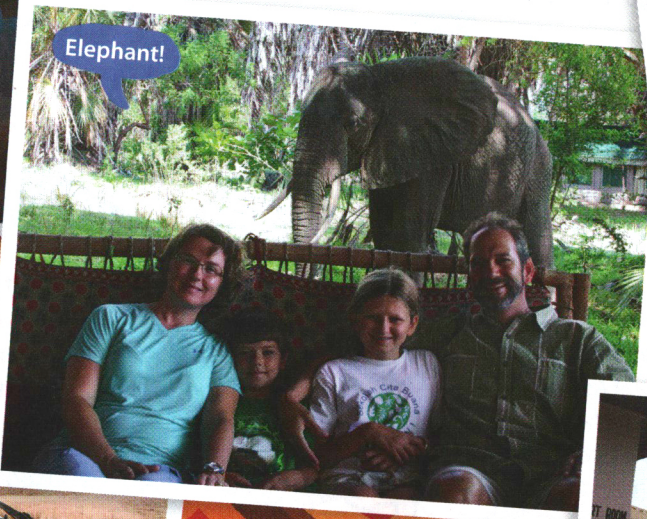
Funny story: My dad saved a little chick while he was working. He brought it home, and we took care of it. That's why we named him Lucky!

What I've learned: I went to a safari park and saw that everything was really dry and the animals were so skinny. The lesson was that we shouldn't take things for granted. ★

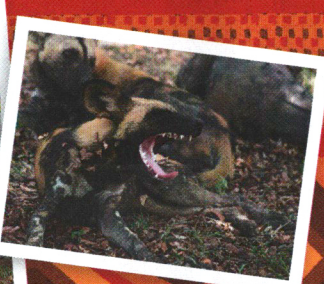
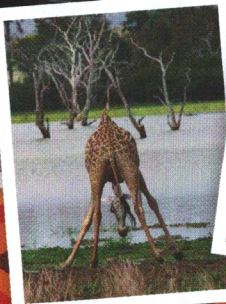
Handling an owl—with supervision, of course!



Elephant!



For my family, every day is an adventure—check out these cool animals!



My school—so pretty

START A BUSINESS



Can you turn a great idea into cash?
It's easy, once you know the way.

You've got an idea for a business—selling bracelets, pet sitting, tutoring a young neighbor, whatever. Let's say you've decided to be a pet sitter. What now?

Start



Yes

Do you know what kinds of jobs you'll do?

Ummm...

Yes

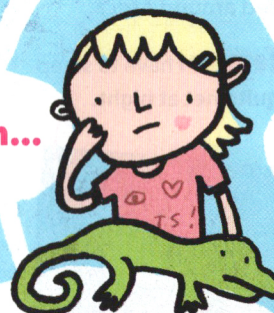


Figure out what will work for you. Maybe you'll play with pets and feed them, but you won't give baths and pick up the yard. **Make a list** of your services.



At this point, ask your parent **what's allowed**. If your mom doesn't want you around large dogs or taking jobs for longer than a week, you'll need to know.



Do you know how to be a good pet sitter?

Well, no

Time to **start learning** everything you can about responsible pet care. Read books from the library, online articles, or brochures from the veterinary office. Also, be creative! Ask a local vet for a few tips, or check with a pet-supply store or animal shelter to see about classes or ideas. You also could practice pet sitting with an adult present.

Or take a babysitting course. Sure, it's not the same thing, but it would help show how mature and prepared you are. And that's what a customer will want—a pet sitter she can **trust**.





Advertise! Tell people about your business using flyers, posters, business cards, or e-mails.

Your ad should have:

- * the name of your business
- * a list of services and costs
- * a way to reach you, such as a family phone number or e-mail address

IMPORTANT:

- * **Be safe**—don't list your last name or address on your advertising.
- * Hand out your ads only to family friends, and always be sure to let a parent know whom you're working for.
- * Find printables and more advice on ads by visiting americangirl.com/play, clicking "Advice Library," and selecting *A Smart Girl's Guide to Money*.

Ask around. Find some family friends who have pets, and ask their advice on **fair pricing**. You also can ask what kinds of services they might use. (Keep in mind that these people could be your future customers! You'll want to offer services they'll value.)

You mean besides my dog, Arfie?

Does anyone know that you're offering pet-sitting services?

Not really

Yes

Yes

Do you know how much to charge?



Congratulations!

You're ready to open for business. ★

End



How Do I...?

What do you want to learn how to do? Tell us by writing to the address on page 7.



She's So Cool— And So Are You!

by Dr. Laurie Zelinger



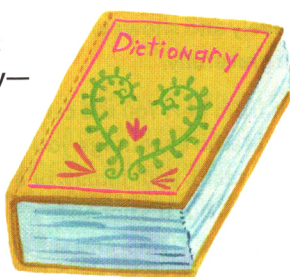
There are all kinds of **reasons** you look up to people, especially the ones who seem to be **special** in some way.

Take this **quiz** to see what makes you sometimes want to be **“just like her.”**

Then turn the page for the **answers** and to find out how you can make your star **shine!**

1. At the spring school assembly, the principal announces that awards and trophies will be given to outstanding students. The cool girl receives

- a.** the school spirit award for signing up so many new members for the after-school clubs.
- b.** a big trophy for scoring the most goals on this year's school soccer team.
- c.** a gigantic dictionary—it's so big that two people have to carry it in!—for winning the school spelling bee.
- d.** a 48-piece acrylic paint set for winning the state art contest.



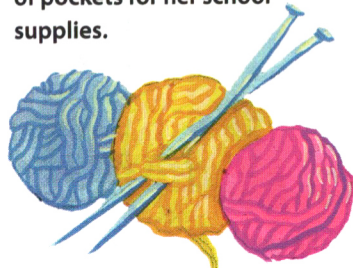
2. When the cool girl walks in, the first thing you notice about her is

- a.** how all the other girls run over to her to say hi.
- b.** she's still in her cleats and must have come straight from practice.
- c.** her saying that she's so happy to be at the party because she's spending the rest of the weekend studying for a science test.
- d.** how cool she looks with the different-patterned shirts she's layered on top of one another.



3. The cool girl shows her favorite birthday present to her friends. It's

- a.** the same shoes that all of her friends wear in different colors.
- b.** a new warm-up suit to wear to and from gymnastics.
- c.** a messenger bag with tons of pockets for her school supplies.



- d.** a scarf that she knit from the boldly colored yarn she was given.

4. Mr. Davis is the substitute teacher today. You can't believe the cool girl was able to convince him

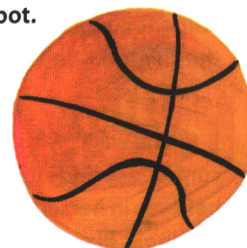
- a.** to let the class work in groups so that everyone can sit with friends.



- b.** that it is gym day instead of music day.
- c.** to let the class have a study hour during the last period.
- d.** to read and discuss her favorite author's poems.

5. It's finally recess time and the doors are open to the playground. The cool girl heads out

- a.** to find all her friends in their usual spot.
- b.** with a basketball and starts setting up teams.
- c.** with her book and reads quietly under the tree.
- d.** to make up a dance with another friend.



6. Everyone is encouraged to sign up for one after-school activity. The cool girl

- a.** asks her friends what they're taking and goes with them.
- b.** asks the gym teacher if she's running any of them.
- c.** joins a science-experiments club.
- d.** is deciding between jazz band and glee club.



Turn the page!

Answers

If you chose mostly a's, you think the Popular Girl is cool.

Who she is: The Popular Girl is surrounded by friends, dresses with flair, and always knows just what to say. She wins the student-council election, eats at the most crowded table in the cafeteria, and gets attention all day long.

Why you look up to her: She walks with confidence and believes in herself. She looks like she has it all, and you want to look like that, too.



What you can learn from her: You too can show the world that you're proud of yourself. Stand straight, look people in the eye, get involved, and have faith in yourself. She may be cool, but popularity doesn't equal perfection. Popular Girl has worries, too, but she doesn't let insecure feelings stop her from trying new things that excite her.

If you chose mostly c's, you think the Smart Girl is cool.

Who she is: The Smart Girl knows the answers, aces tests, and seems to do it all without effort. She loves to learn and makes school projects seem enjoyable.

Why you look up to her: Smart Girl seems to know everything. She never gets embarrassed or says "I don't know!" when the teacher calls on her. Classmates who need help call and e-mail her and know they can rely on her.

What you can learn from her: You too can move to the head of the class. Even if you've struggled with schoolwork in the past, you can take small steps to improve your grades. Add an extra 30 minutes of studying each day, read a book instead of watching TV, or take neater notes. She may be cool, but there's more to her life than grades. Smart Girl puts a lot of pressure on herself, and she wants other kids to like her for who she is, not just because she can help them study. And she hates being called a "bookworm."



If you chose mostly b's, you think the Sporty Girl is cool.

Who she is: The Sporty Girl is strong and athletic. She goes after the ball with determination but also cheers on her teammates when it's their turn to shine.

Why you look up to her: Sporty Girl is active and healthy, and she makes exercise look like fun. As part of a team, she belongs to a group of girls who support one another. She plays competitively and shows what it's like to win graciously and lose gracefully.



What you can learn from her: You too can be fit, strong, and surrounded by people who encourage you to do your best—whether that means a team, your family, or a close group of friends. She may be cool, but it's not all fun. Sporty Girl doesn't always get the position she wants, and she also gets frustrated when she and her teammates don't play well.

If you chose mostly d's, you think the Artsy Girl is cool.

Who she is: The Artsy Girl is creative. She has style and doesn't mind standing out in a crowd. She is happiest when she is doing her art, whether it's painting, acting, dancing, singing, or playing an instrument.

Why you look up to her: Artsy Girl is not a follower; she has unusual interests and thinks creatively.

She has talent and makes amazing things.

What you can learn from her: You too can make a statement. Even if you've always been a little shy, you can make small changes to get more attention. Get a new haircut, wear a color you've never tried, or take a class to learn a new hobby. Just show your true self with confidence, and people will see your uniqueness shining through. She may be cool, but being a trendsetter is a lot of work. And since her art skills aren't something she can always use at school, she doesn't always feel like she shines in the classroom.



Now, it's your turn to shine!

To you, the Popular Girl, Sporty Girl, Smart Girl, and Artsy Girl seem like stars, but you can shine just as brightly as they do. Now find out what makes *you* special.

Natural talent

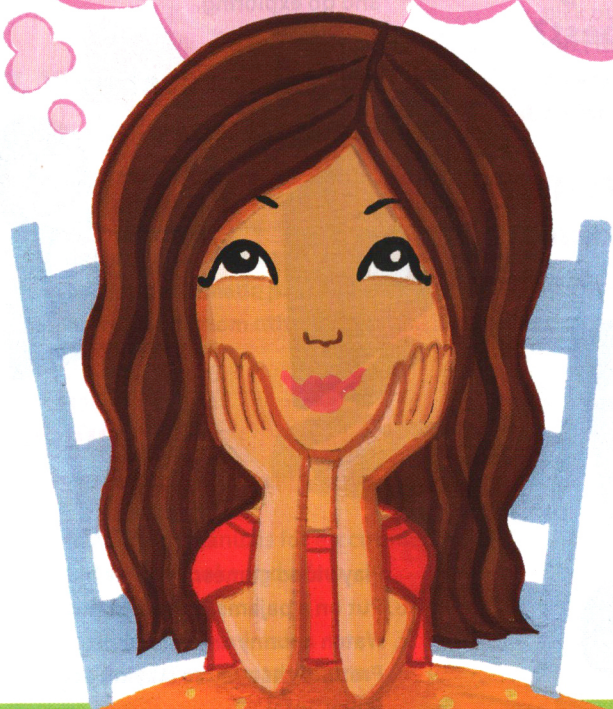
Some people are born with natural skills or gifts. Maybe they possess a beautiful singing voice, the ability to memorize all kinds of facts, or the perfect feet for ballet. Show someone your special talent, and you're bound to have a small crowd gather in no time. Get someone to take a picture of you in action, and submit it to the yearbook!

Some things don't come naturally.

People who are good at things usually aren't just naturally talented. They've had to try something new, make mistakes, and practice. When you're starting out, a new thing can be scary because you have to take risks and be willing to be embarrassed.

Reach for your dream!

If you want to feel more confident, choose a goal to reach for and take one step at a time toward it. The steps may be practicing, studying, or rehearsing. The work might not always be fun, and at times it will even be frustrating or boring. But if you keep at it, you'll feel more confident and become your own bright-shining star. ★



More ways to shine can be found in *A Smart Girl's Guide to Liking Herself*.



Too-cools

Which dream school matches your personality? Take this quiz and find out!



1. You have a free Saturday afternoon, so you...

- a. download new apps to your cell phone.
- b. add pictures and quotes to a bulletin board.
- c. volunteer at the animal shelter.
- d. eat at an Indian restaurant.



2. If your friends were to throw a surprise party for you, what would the theme be?

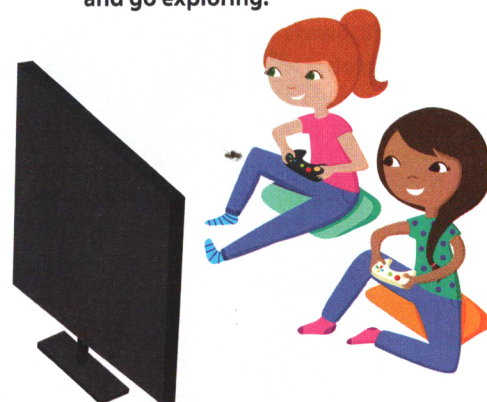
- a. Build Your Own Robot
- b. Sparkle and Shine
- c. Earth Day Every Day
- d. Hawaiian Luau

3. Which of these bags do you like the best?



4. I love spring because...

- a. I get to show off my skills at the science fair.
- b. I like creating beautiful bouquets from the flowers in our yard.
- c. I plant new trees and help to clean up a local park.
- d. I bike around my neighborhood and go exploring.



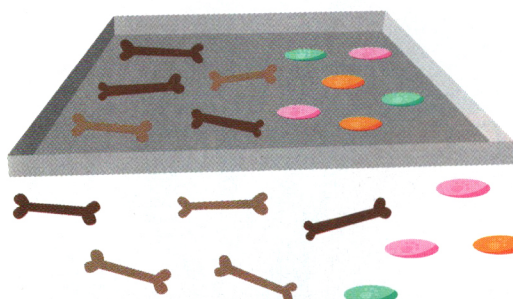
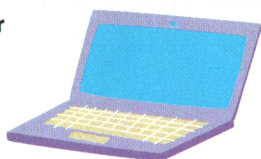
5. Which of these sounds like something you'd do at a slumber party?

- a. Play video games.
- b. Put on a pajama fashion show.
- c. Watch a funny animal movie.
- d. Pretend that you're staying at a fancy hotel.

SCHOOLS

6. If you were to start a blog to share with friends, it would have...

- a. how-to videos for building things.
- b. photos of you in your favorite outfits.
- c. easy and fun tips for green living.
- d. a map of all of the places you've traveled to.



7. Your favorite thing to do in the kitchen might be...

- a. inventing new recipes.
- b. decorating cookies and cupcakes.
- c. baking homemade pet treats.
- d. trying foods from other countries.

8. Under your bed, we might find...

- a. instruction manuals for electronics.
- b. old sketchbooks and a few pairs of shoes.
- c. lots of stuffed animals.
- d. postcards and photo albums.



9. When you get home from school, the first thing you do is...

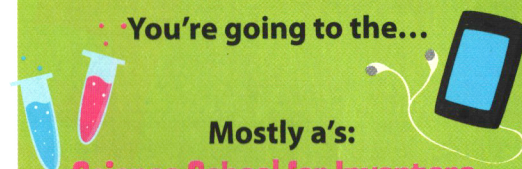
- a. check your e-mail.
- b. pick out your clothes for the next day.
- c. play with your dog.
- d. go for a walk.

10. Which of these doodles could be found in your notebook?



ANSWERS

You're going to the...



Mostly a's:

Science School for Inventors.

Congrats, gadget girl! You've been accepted into a school where you'll get to create futuristic inventions, make concoctions in the chemistry lab, and work on projects for once-a-week science fairs.



Mostly b's:

School of Future Fashion Designers.



You love to draw and put together unique outfits, so a school where you can express your creativity is perfect for you. You'll use a sketchbook instead of a textbook, visit art museums, and design ensembles for student fashion shows.



Mostly c's:

Green School for Planet Protectors.



As an eco-friendly, animal-loving girl, you'd like a school that helps the planet. You'll rescue animals and take care of them at the school clinic. For a class project, you'll grow vegetables to sell at a farmers' market, and the profits will go toward helping endangered animals.



Mostly d's:

World Travelers' School.



Pack your bags. You're off to a school where traveling the world is just a normal school day. In class, you'll learn about geography and world cultures. Then for your field trips, you'll visit the places you've been learning about. Make sure to pack your passport! ★

Easter Egg-stravaganza

These decorative eggs are to dye for!



Egg Tips



Ask an adult to help with each of these egg-dyeing crafts.

- * Use only food-safe egg dye or food coloring to dye eggs.
- * Cover the work surface with a plastic tablecloth before dyeing and decorating eggs.
- * Set your decorated eggs on a cooling rack to dry.



Cute Crayon

Doodle designs on egg with crayons. Press firmly with crayon while drawing. Dye egg in desired color. Let dry.

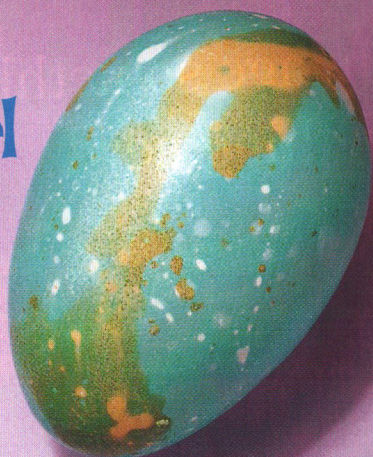


Band-Made

Gently stretch rubber bands around egg. Dye egg in desired color. Let dry completely. Carefully remove rubber bands.

Super Swirl

Add 1 tablespoon vegetable oil to each dye and stir. Dip egg into one color of dye quickly, and remove. Continue dipping for more intense color. Let dry before dipping into another color.



Dot to Dot

Place office-dot stickers on egg. Dye egg in desired color. Let dry completely. Carefully peel off stickers to reveal polka-dot design.



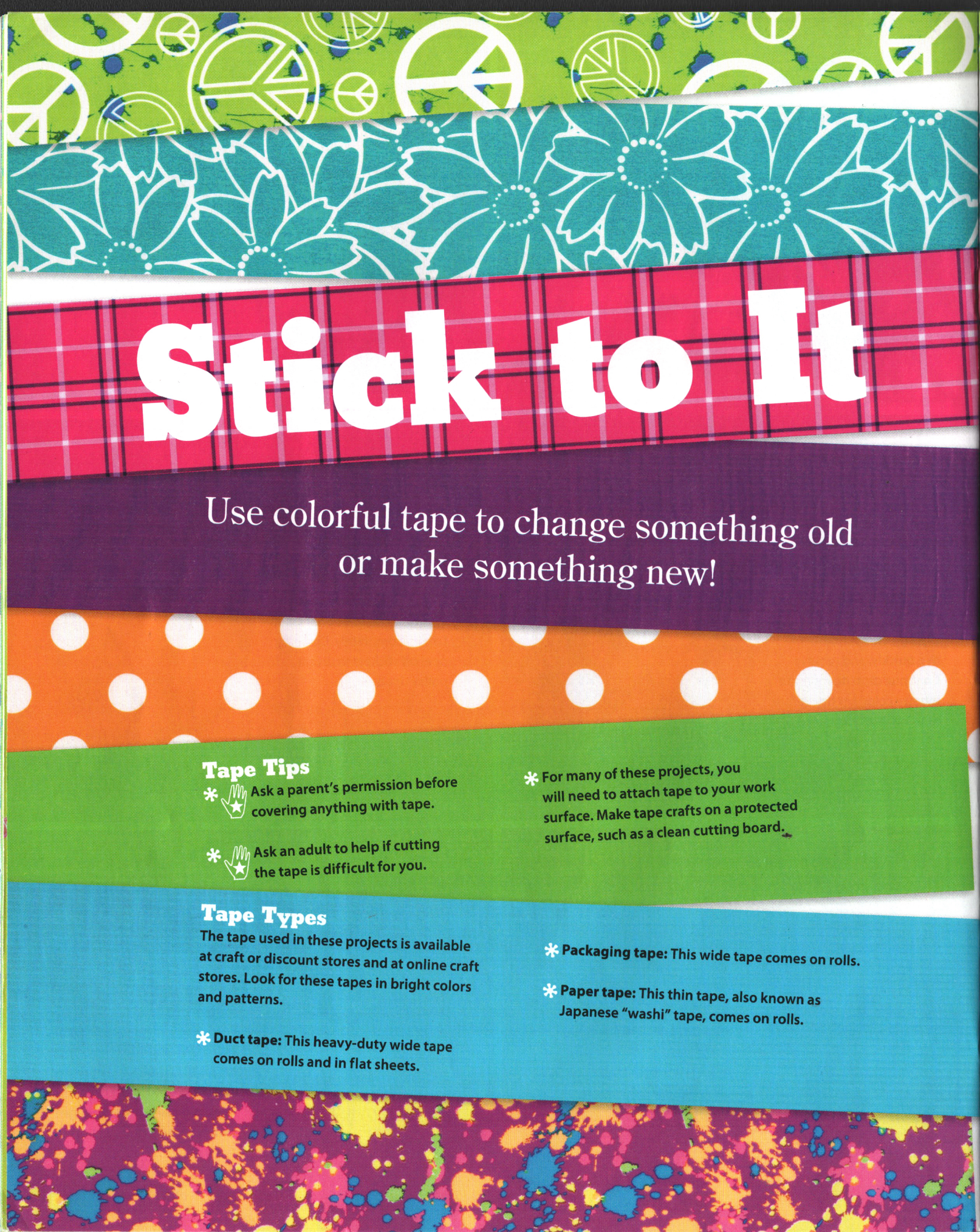
Glittery Glam

Dye egg in desired color and let dry. Cover with glitter paint. Let dry. This egg is for decoration only, so don't eat it!



Sponge Dip



Put 5 drops of food coloring into a cup, and add a few drops of water. Dip a sponge into dye and press onto egg. Let dry. Continue using other sponges with different colors. Let dry. ★



Stick to It

Use colorful tape to change something old or make something new!

Tape Tips

- *  Ask a parent's permission before covering anything with tape.
- *  Ask an adult to help if cutting the tape is difficult for you.

- * For many of these projects, you will need to attach tape to your work surface. Make tape crafts on a protected surface, such as a clean cutting board.

Tape Types

The tape used in these projects is available at craft or discount stores and at online craft stores. Look for these tapes in bright colors and patterns.

- * **Duct tape:** This heavy-duty wide tape comes on rolls and in flat sheets.

- * **Packaging tape:** This wide tape comes on rolls.

- * **Paper tape:** This thin tape, also known as Japanese "washi" tape, comes on rolls.

Pet Placemat

Set a place for your pet. First, create a duct tape sheet by slightly overlapping six 15-inch-long pieces of duct tape. Carefully peel the sheet from your work surface and turn it sticky-side up. Cover the sticky side with more overlapping duct-tape strips. Use scissors to trim the short ends of the rectangle so that they are straight. Finish the placemat with a tape border.



Tape Mosaic

Try this idea for covering small surfaces—a hairbrush, a vase, or a journal. Cut duct tape into small pieces. (You can also use any leftover tape bits from another craft.) Cover the surface of your item with the tape pieces, one at a time. Make sure the pieces overlap a little. Try using tape with different colors and patterns.



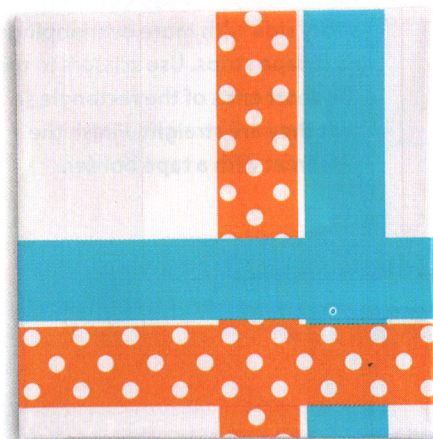
Striped Straps

Add more color to your backpack! For this project, start by cutting many short tape strips (1 to 2 inches long). Wrap each strip around your backpack straps, slightly overlapping each one. Add strips until the straps are covered. Try this on a tote-bag handle, too!



Quick Art

Dress up your walls with bright and bold tape "paintings." Start with a plain art canvas (available at craft stores). Cover the whole canvas with overlapping tape strips. (Duct tape works best. If you use packaging tape, be sure to layer it over duct tape.) Try designs like these:



Headband Makeover

Use patterned duct tape to make an old headband new.

1. Pull a length of duct tape from a roll, but don't cut it. Starting at one end of a 1-inch-wide plastic headband, center the tape along the outside.
2. Press the tape into place, pulling more tape from the roll as you go. When you reach the end, cut the tape off the roll.
3. Fold the two edges of the tape underneath the headband, one edge at a time. Then trim any excess tape at the ends.





Sweet Stickers

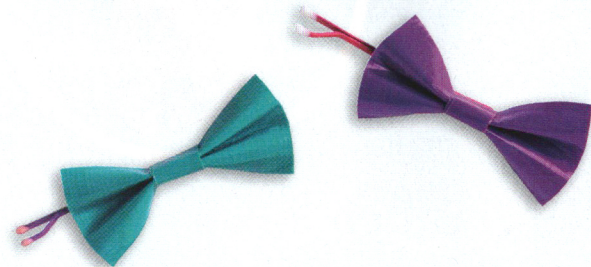
Design your own stickers! Lay a duct-tape sheet on a table so that the paper backing faces up. Use a pen to draw or trace shapes onto the sheet. Cut out each shape with scissors. Peel off the paper backing, and use the stickers to decorate a notebook, a photo frame, or any of your tape creations.



Bitty Bow

Decorate a bobby pin with an itty-bitty bow.

1. Cut a 2-inch-long piece of duct tape. Fold in half so that the sticky sides attach to each other. You should have a 1-inch-long strip.
2. Fold the strip in half by bringing the two longer edges together.
3. Bring the top edge back to meet the fold, and crease. Repeat with the bottom edge.
4. Pinch the strip in the middle and fan out the ends. Wrap a small piece of duct tape around the middle. Slide the bow onto a bobby pin.



Cup Cozy

Cover a cardboard cup cozy with bright tape. Reuse the cozy whenever you have a warm drink!




Pretty Placeholder

Keep your place with a fun bookmark. Cut two 7-inch pieces of white duct tape. Lay one piece flat on your work surface, sticky-side up. Press the second piece on top of it, sticky-side down. Layer a strip of patterned packaging tape on top of the duct tape. Repeat on the other side.



Belt Redo

Boring belt? Just add tape! (Be sure to ask a parent's permission first.)

1. Start with a belt in your size. Cut many short strips of duct tape. (The strips should be about twice as long as the belt is wide.)
2. Starting at one end, wrap tape strips around the belt so that each one overlaps a little.
3.  Ask an adult to help you punch through the holes in the belt. Wear the belt around your waist for a pop of color!



Crazy Cuffs

Update a pair of jeans with new tape cuffs. (Be sure to ask a parent's permission first.) Wrap duct tape around the bottom of each pant leg and fold the bottom edge of the tape underneath. (Make sure to remove the tape before washing the jeans.)



Braided Bangle

Weave a tape bracelet!

1. Cut three 15-inch-long strips of duct tape. Fold each one in half lengthwise. (It's OK if there are wrinkles or if the edges don't line up perfectly.)
2. Gather the three strips at one end and wrap a small piece of tape around them to hold them together. Tape this end to your work surface. Pulling tightly, braid the strips.
3. When you reach the bottom, bring the ends of the braided rope together. The bracelet should be large enough to slide on and off your wrist. If it's too large, trim the rope. To finish, wrap a piece of duct tape around the ends to make a circle.



Gift Bag

Use strips of duct tape or packaging tape to add fun stripes to a gift bag.





Sticky Pics

Here's an easy way to decorate your locker. First, choose a photo you won't use again. With scissors, cut a flat sheet magnet into a rectangle that's about 1 inch larger than your photo on all sides. Cover one side of the magnet with strips of duct tape. Next, attach the photo to the covered magnet with double-stick tape. Then cover the entire front side of the magnet (including the photo) with clear packaging tape. Trim any tape that hangs over the edges of the magnet. Make more than one, and swap out magnets when your locker needs a new look.



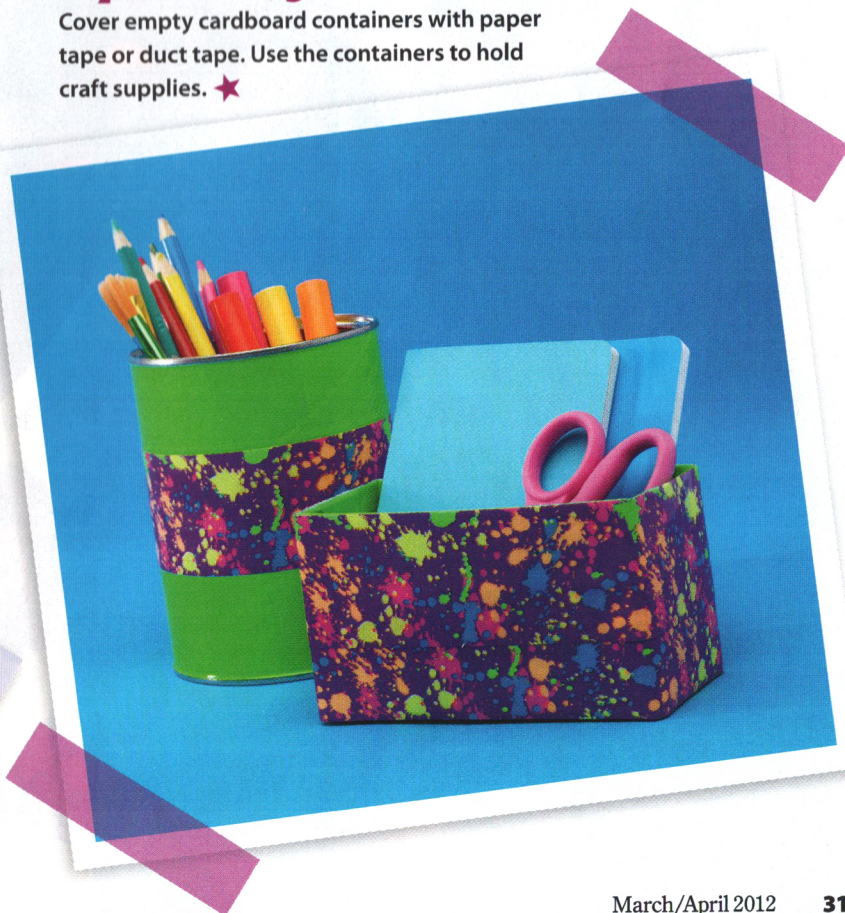
Simple Style

Add color to everyday items by adding pieces of paper tape.



Stylish Storage

Cover empty cardboard containers with paper tape or duct tape. Use the containers to hold craft supplies. ★



Neat Notes

Send a fun note! Start with a plain, unlined 3-by-5-inch index card. Cover one side with patterned packaging tape. Trim any excess tape. Make a stack of note cards so that you'll have a stationery stash.



The Truth Club

Frankie and her friends start a Truth Club,
but is honesty *always* the best policy?

by Kathy Passero



Honesty is the best policy. Parents say it. Teachers say it. Everybody says it. That's why Abby, Hannah, Gilby, and I decided to form a Truth Club. We swore to be 100 percent honest with each other about everything. The four of us had been best friends since kindergarten, so we figured, "What could go wrong?"

Just goes to show what everybody knows.

We founded the Truth Club right before rehearsals started for our school's big fifth-grade musical. It's "big" because Mrs. Euitable, the drama teacher, gives parts to as many kids as possible and also because excitement starts building for it in early March and doesn't die down until after the show ends in April.

Nobody was more excited than the four of us. We had been waiting to be in the fifth-grade musical practically forever. This year's production was *Alice in Wonderland*, and none of us were surprised when Abby got the lead. Abby loves acting. She wants to star in movies when she grows up. She's the reason we started thinking about the musical in the first place. Whenever you go to her house, you choose a costume from the trunk in her attic and act out a movie. Or a book if Hannah's there, because Hannah loves reading as much as Abby loves acting.

Hannah, Gilby, and I were playing Wonderland Flowers with four other girls. When Abby walked onstage, we had to eye her suspiciously and say that she didn't look like a flower, so she couldn't join our garden party. They were small parts, but we got to sing in the opening and closing numbers. And anyway, we were used to supporting roles. We'd been playing them in Abby's attic for years. Abby was always the star, because it was her house and she knew the most about acting.

Even a small role in the musical got you excused from class a half hour early to rehearse every day

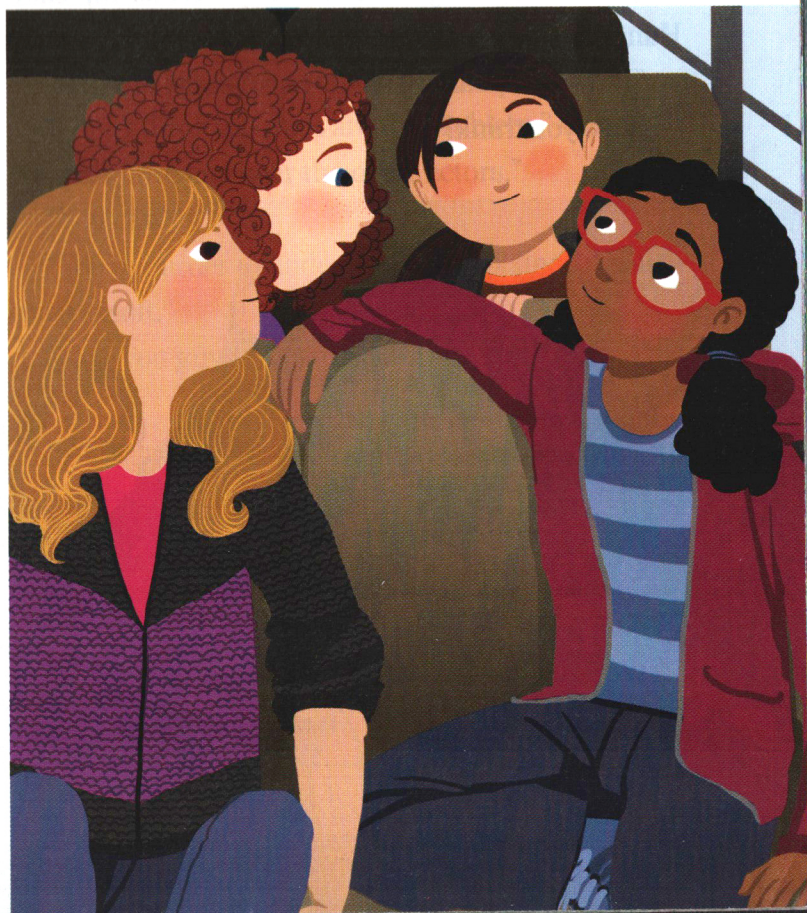
for a month before the show. That's another reason everybody wanted to be in it. Well, almost everybody, as the Truth Club revealed.

Our club met on the bus ride home because it was one of the few times the four of us could talk without getting into trouble for not doing something else, like schoolwork. We had two rules: First, if another member asked you a question, you had to answer honestly. Second, every member had to share one totally honest thing. You started by saying, "The truth is . . ."

"The truth is, I'm worried about being out of class so much," Hannah told us the first week of rehearsals. "What if I miss something important?"

"The musical is important, too," Abby reminded her. "You can study anytime. You get only one chance to do this!"

"Besides, there's no way you'll fall behind," Gilby added. "You're so far ahead, you'll just give everyone a chance to catch up."



Gilby was right. Hannah is a total brainiac. She usually raises her hand before her teacher even finishes asking a question.

Hannah didn't seem convinced, though. We were supposed to practice our parts in the back of the auditorium when it wasn't our turn onstage, but Hannah did homework or read. Gilby and I alternated between practicing and watching Abby, who was always onstage because she was in every scene. Mrs. Eitable had a lot of what she called "helpful hints" for her.

"Slow down, dear," Mrs. Eitable would call out. "Speak clearly. Sing loudly. Remember to face the audience so we can hear you."

"Abby looks really annoyed," Gilby whispered to me.

Sure enough, Mrs. Eitable's helpful hints came up at the Truth Club. "The truth is, this musical isn't turning out to be nearly as much fun as I expected," Abby said. "Mrs. Eitable is always picking on me."

"She's just giving you constructive criticism," said Hannah.

"But I am speaking loudly and clearly. Frankie, what do you think?"

"We were at the back of the auditorium today, and we couldn't hear you either," I told her.

I was just being honest, but Abby looked hurt. Her house is closest to the bus stop, and when we got off she barely said good-bye. Gilby watched her disappear behind her front door, and then turned to us. "I've got a great idea!" She wanted to make a huge poster that read "Abby as Alice rocks!" to tape up at the back of the auditorium.

Hannah and I spent Saturday afternoon helping her. Gilby drew all these incredible scenes of Wonderland around the words. Then we painted them bright colors and put glitter over the wet paint to make it extra eye-catching. Monday at rehearsal we surprised Abby with it. "When you see this, you'll remember the people in the back rows who need to hear you, too," Gilby explained.

Abby beamed. "Thanks, you guys!"




Mrs. Eitable walked over just as we were putting the poster up. *Oh, no*, I thought. *She's going to tell us it won't be fair to the other actors if Abby gets a special sign.* But instead she asked, "Did you draw all this?"

She was so impressed that she put Gilby in charge of set design. Gilby drew enormous versions of all



the crazy flowers, mushrooms, and butterflies from our sign on rolls of heavy brown paper, and the rest of the cast cut them out or painted them in when it wasn't their turn to rehearse. Ms. Straw, the art teacher, would help us turn them into backdrops later.

When Gilby was surrounded by paint and brushes, you couldn't wipe the smile off her face. But the moment she set foot onstage, she froze. She stood there like a baby deer in a truck's head-

 "Now you guys are picking on
 me, too!" Abby cried. 

lights, staring blankly at Abby's poster on the back wall. I whispered her lines to her, but she sounded like a robot reciting them.

"The truth is, I wish I'd never let you guys talk me into this," Gilby confessed at the Truth Club. "I'm awful at acting."

"You were always good at it when we made up plays," I pointed out.

"That was different. Nobody could see me except you three."

"You've got stage fright," Abby said. "Don't worry. It'll go away before the show."

But it didn't. It got worse. "I keep imagining all those seats full of people," Gilby moaned. "Do you know how many people could be watching us?"

"Four hundred," said Hannah. "I counted. Ten seats on each side of the aisle times twenty rows."

"You're not helping!" Gilby wailed. "What was I thinking? I can't do this!"

"You promised," Hannah reminded her. "If I have to be in the musical, you have to."

"What do you mean 'have to'? I asked. "Don't you want to?"

"I just mean we promised to stick together," Hannah muttered.

I suspected Hannah was breaking the Truth Club's number one rule. I thought the truth was that she didn't want to be in the musical either. She spent every spare minute in the back of the auditorium, supposedly helping Gilby but secretly studying. The sets were almost finished anyway, and they looked amazing. Now Gilby was starting on props, working with Ms. Straw to design giant cardboard teacups

and croquet mallets that looked like flamingos. They had more than enough people eager to help, and I could recite my lines in my sleep, so I watched whoever happened to be onstage and listened to Mrs. Evidable's endless helpful hints for Abby.

"The truth is, Mrs. Evidable is impossible to please," Abby complained at the Truth Club. "It's not my fault the school's microphones are ancient."

"I don't think the mics are the problem," said Hannah. "We can hear the other actors."

"You can?"

"You're harder to understand," I explained. "Your voice is soft."

"Now you guys are picking on me, too!" Abby cried.

"We're just trying to help," Hannah assured her.

"You want to know the truth, don't you?" I asked.

"Otherwise, how can you get better?"

"Keep working—you'll get there," Gilby said.

"Easy for you to say," Abby muttered. "You don't know what it's like being in every scene."

"But the truth is, it's what you wanted," Hannah reminded her.

Gilby took a deep breath. "Speaking of the truth, Mrs. Evidable thinks I'd be better off just working on sets and costumes and . . . um . . . that's what I'm going to do."

"You're dropping out of the musical?" asked Hannah, dumbfounded.

"I'll still be involved, just not onstage. Frankie knows my lines better than I do anyway. She can say them."

"But it won't be the same! We were supposed to be in the show together!" cried Abby.

"What difference does it make? I'm hardly in it anyway. The other Flowers will probably be happy. They'll get more lines and I'll stop messing everybody up."

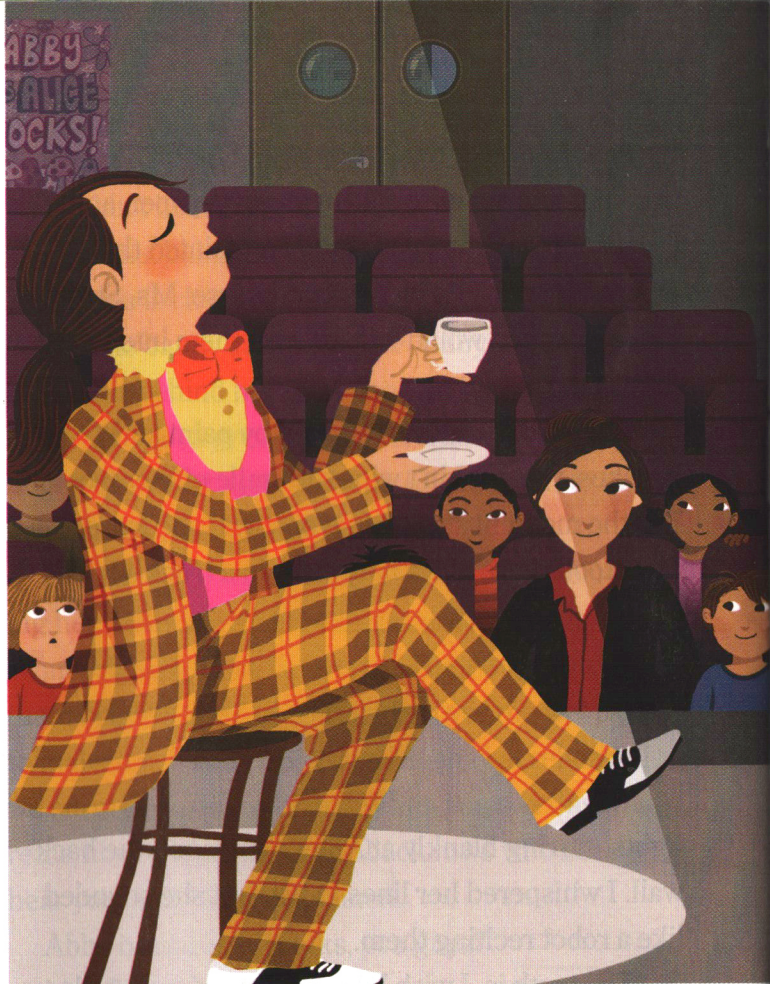
"But . . ." Abby began.

"Gilby's right," said Hannah firmly. "The truth is, she likes art. Not acting. She should do what she wants." Then she hesitated. "I'm going to talk to Mrs. Evidable about quitting too."

"WHAT?"

"Look, acting's not my thing either. And I hate missing class. You can fill me in on everything that happens in rehearsals."

Abby slumped down in her seat. "I can't believe it. We said we'd do this together, and you guys are all abandoning me."



Mrs. Evidable was very understanding when Hannah and Gilby quit the Flower scene. I had a hunch that she included lots of kids because she knew a few would drop out. And, just as Gilby predicted, the other Flowers were thrilled to have more lines. At first they forgot them, but I helped whenever anyone needed a prompt.

✿ "I can't believe it. We said we'd do this together, and you guys are all abandoning me." ✿

"I'm not abandoning you," I said. "I'm still in the play."

"But it's not what we planned."

I did the same for other characters. It turned out I'd accidentally memorized almost everybody's lines while I was watching them rehearse.

Then an amazing thing happened. The girl playing the Mad Hatter was absent, and Mrs. Evitable called me over. "I'm guessing you know her lines, don't you, Frankie?" she asked, smiling at me. "Would you like to give it a try?"

I remembered to speak slowly, sing loudly, and keep my body turned toward the audience. It was easy after hearing Mrs. Evitable say it so often. Afterward, she made me the official understudy, which meant if anybody missed rehearsal, I played that person's part! The only bad thing was that I kept secretly hoping people would catch the flu. When the Mad Hatter got tonsillitis and had to drop out, I was afraid I'd made it happen. I sent her a get-well card so I wouldn't feel as guilty about taking over her part.

The kindergartners came to watch one of my first rehearsals as the Mad Hatter, and they cracked up during my scenes. I loved it! Hearing all that laughter from the audience made me feel like I was floating. Some other kids complimented me, too, and on the bus ride home Gilby told Hannah, "Frankie's incredible as the Mad Hatter! Even Mrs. Evitable thinks so."

I was still glowing from the drama teacher's praise. "Notice how Frankie uses body language and mannerisms?" she asked the cast. "That helps the audience understand her character even when she's not speaking."

"I had no idea this musical would be so much fun!" I told my friends on the bus. Then, since this was the Truth Club, I shared something I'd been thinking a lot lately. "The truth is, I might want to be an actress when I grow up."

"You really should be!" Gilby said. "You're great at acting."

"But being an actress is my idea!" Abby burst out loudly.

"I know," I said, surprised. "Why can't we both do it? There are a lot of actresses in the world."

"But it was my idea first!" Abby said. "Ever since you got the Mad Hatter part, it's like you're taking it over!"

Hannah frowned. "I don't understand," she said. "You were upset when Gilby and I dropped out of the musical. Now you're upset that Frankie likes it?"

Abby looked ready to cry. "No. It's just . . ." she stammered. "It's easy for you, Frankie. You just have a few little scenes. I have a lot more pressure on me."

"But that's what you wanted," we reminded her.

"I know," she sighed.

"Maybe Frankie can help," Gilby suggested.

"She's got loads of good ideas."

"I'd love to," I said, eagerly. The truth was, I'd been wondering what would have happened if I had tried out for the lead. I could think of a bunch of things I would have changed. I gave Abby helpful hints all week, but she didn't want to hear them.



"You're still talking too fast in the scenes where you're supposed to be angry or nervous," I told her. "Maybe you should try—"

"Mrs. Evitable didn't say anything about that," Abby interrupted.

"That's because the show's in a few days. She's got a lot on her mind," I said. "But Gilby said she noticed it, too."

"It would help if you spoke a little slower," Gilby agreed.

"Stop criticizing me!" Abby said, her cheeks reddening. "You're always telling me what I'm doing wrong!"

"We're just being honest," I assured her. "The truth is—"

"The truth is, this role is going to your head," Abby snapped. "You act like you're the teacher. You don't know any more about acting than I do!"

I felt like she had slapped me. Too stunned and hurt to answer, I glared out the bus window, fighting back tears. In the seat ahead of me, Abby did the same. Out of the corner of my eye I could see Hannah and Gilby shooting glances at each other, trying to figure out how to smooth things over.

That's when it dawned on me that honesty wasn't always the best policy. I bet most people probably didn't tell each other every honest thing that popped into their heads because it's just as easy to hurt someone's feelings when you tell the truth as it is when you lie.

I couldn't get Abby's words out of my head. She and I avoided each other whenever we didn't have to be onstage together and we didn't speak on the bus. The Truth Club was history. Maybe the friendship, too.

Hannah and Gilby seemed afraid to bring up what had happened, but they went out of their way to be nice to both of us. With Ms. Straw's help,

Gilby made Abby an adorable stuffed cat to hold during the opening scene, and she made me a cool Mad Hatter's hat with polka-dot ribbons.

I was still angry, but I refused to let Abby ruin the musical for me. Our first performance was Friday at 6:00 P.M., and my whole family would be there. I couldn't concentrate on anything all day. Eight hours until the show . . . five hours . . . two hours! Hannah had agreed to help Gilby and Ms. Straw with last-minute costume and set details, so all four of us were backstage at the auditorium by 5:00 P.M., with Abby and me on opposite sides of the crowded, noisy dressing room.

I put on my makeup, ran through my lines one last time, and got into my costume. Suddenly I realized my hat was missing. I dug frantically through the boxes of props and ran between cast members, asking, "Have you seen my hat?" They were all hurrying to get ready. No one had time to help me. The curtain would go up in 20 minutes,



and the most important part of my costume had vanished!

Then I caught sight of Abby standing in front of a mirror, adjusting her blonde Alice wig. She glanced at me nervously, then looked away. *I'll bet she took it*, I thought. I stomped over with my hands on my hips.

"Where's my hat?" I demanded.

She gazed at me, wide-eyed and pale under her makeup. Judging from her expression, she was realizing that stage fright doesn't always go away before a show.

"How am I supposed to be the Mad Hatter with no hat?" I shouted. "You hid it!"

"What are you talking about? I didn't hide your stupid hat!"

Just then, Gilby and Hannah hurried into the dressing room. Hannah was holding my giant top hat while Gilby made adjustments to it. They stopped when they saw us shouting.

"Frankie, I'm sorry," Gilby said. "I took your hat. I wanted to add these." She pointed to a border of neon pom-poms around the brim.

I could see my reflection in the mirror behind Abby. In my oversized plaid suit and my orange bow tie, scowling and yelling, I looked as crazy as the Mad Hatter. Talk about getting into character.

That's when it hit me: Abby was right. I'd let a few compliments inflate my ego to the size of that enormous hat. And I hadn't been supporting my friend when she needed encouragement most.

"You guys," said Hannah. "You're putting way too much into this musical."

"I know. I'm sorry!" I told Abby.

"I'm sorry!" she answered. "I was being selfish. I'm just stressed because I'm terrible as Alice."

"I was being selfish," I said. "And you're not terrible. You're really talented!"

"You were both being selfish," said Hannah with



a smile. "And you're both really talented!"

"Now, will you just hug it out?" asked Gilby, glancing at her watch. "You've got five minutes until the show starts!"

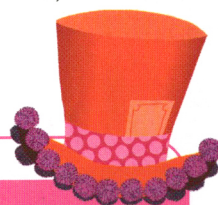
Abby and I wrapped our arms around each other. It felt wonderful to be surrounded by my BFFs again. Here we were, backstage at the fifth-grade musical at last. It wasn't exactly how we'd imagined it, but we were together. And the truth was, that was all that mattered. ★

Meet the Author



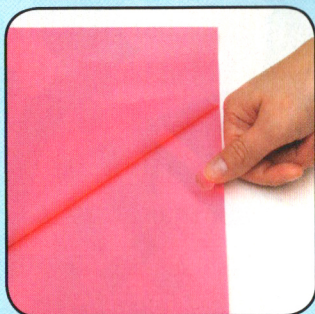
Kathy Passero


I made my first—and last—appearance in an elementary school musical when I played a spotted rabbit. Like Gilby, I soon realized that I was far better suited to the audience than the stage!

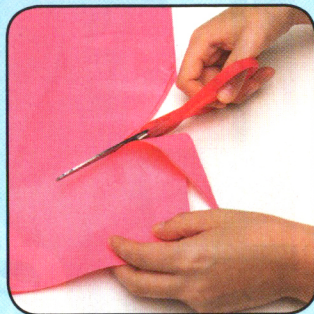


Let It Rain!

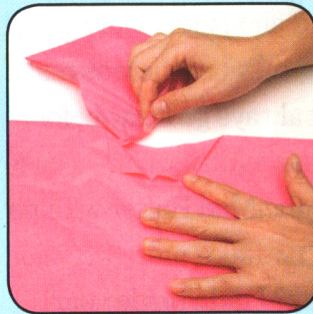
Hooded Poncho



1.  With an adult's permission, fold a clean **plastic tablecloth** or **shower curtain** in half. With the fold as the top edge, cut a 13-inch square and a 6-inch square, leaving the fold uncut. Put a **Glue Dot®** on both side "seams" 4 inches down from the fold.

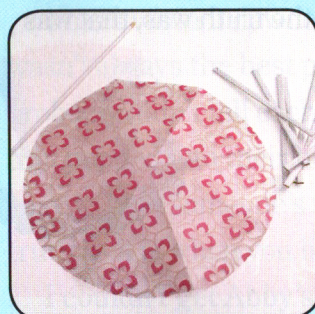


2. Fold the large square into a rectangle, and cut off the corner fold for a neck hole. Then, starting below the dot, trim a rounded edge to the other side as shown. Open the square, and cut a slit in the front part of the neck hole. Glue on a pocket if you like.

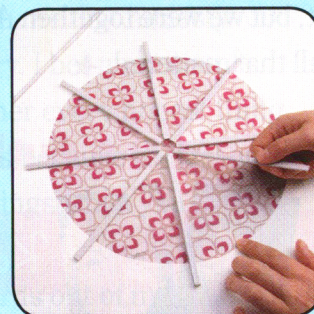



3. For a hood, position the small square with the fold at top. Then round off the left edge, and seal that edge with Glue Dots. Use the dots to attach the bottom edge of the hood to the back of the neck hole along the inside seam as shown.

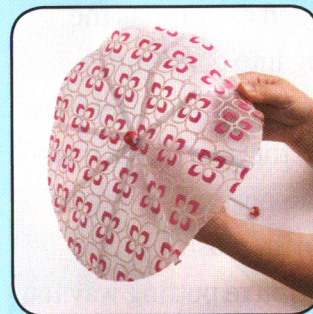
Umbrella



1. Cut a large circle from **plastic scrapbook paper**. Fold the circle in half 4 times—each time in a different direction—so that the circle looks like a pizza with 8 slices. Wrap 8 **stirrer sticks** and a 12-inch **dowel** in **duct tape**.



2.  Fold the circle along the creases to make a triangle, and nip off the tip. Open the circle, and use **Glue Dots** to attach the sticks along the creases. Ask an adult to help trim the sticks to the edge.



3. Slip the dowel through the hole, and use **glue** to attach a **bead** on the top and bottom ends. Let dry. Tightly wrap a **rubber band** around the dowel, and push it up to the umbrella canopy. Bend and snap each stick down to create an umbrella shape. ★



Dress your doll for drizzly days.

Caution!

Some plastics can bleed onto your doll, so use lighter colors, and don't get your doll or the rain gear wet. Check your doll often. If colors start to bleed, remove the gear immediately.



Check out "Behind the Scenes" on page 48 to help your doll hold her umbrella!

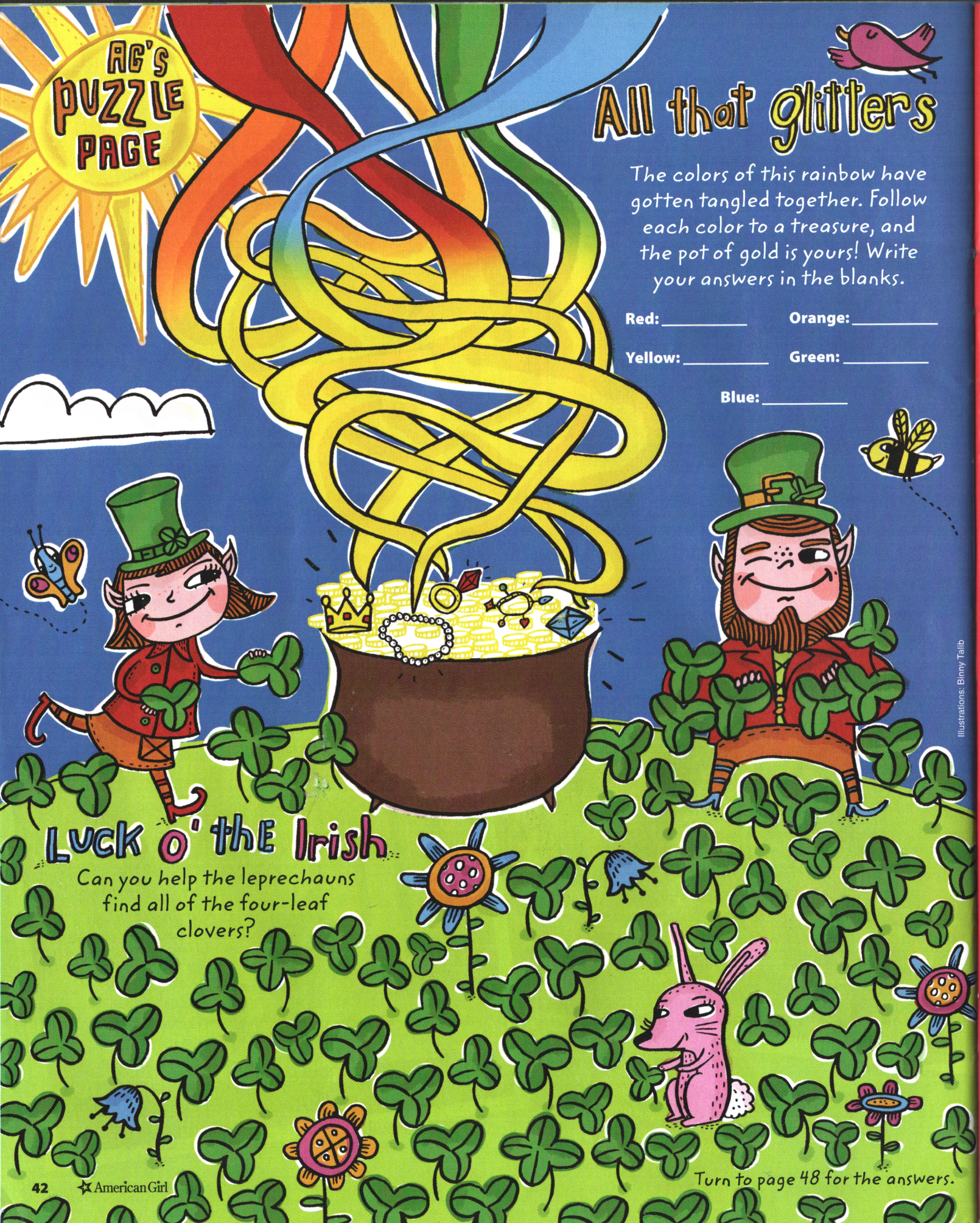
All that glitters

The colors of this rainbow have gotten tangled together. Follow each color to a treasure, and the pot of gold is yours! Write your answers in the blanks.

Red: _____ Orange: _____

Yellow: _____ Green: _____

Blue: _____



Luck o' the Irish

Can you help the leprechauns find all of the four-leaf clovers?

 Posters Carefully cut along the dotted lines to remove your posters. ★



Spread Your Wings

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Photo: Susan Gary/Flickr/Getty Images

I'm all ears!



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HELP!

Dear American Girl,

My little brother read a page of my diary. Even worse, he found out a personal thing about me and told my whole family!

What do I do?

What your brother did was *not* OK. Get help from a parent to make sure that your brother respects your privacy from now on. As for what was in your diary, you can't take back what your brother said. The best you can do is close your eyes and take some deep breaths. You must be feeling super mad and embarrassed right now, but it'll get better with time.



Dear American Girl,

I'm busy in the mornings, so I've been skipping breakfast. Is that bad?

a little hungry

You're going to school hungry?

That sure isn't good. Eating breakfast is important. A morning meal gets your brain and body going and helps you to focus at school. Make time for a fast breakfast every day. Peanut butter on toast is a great option. So are cereal, yogurt, fruit, eggs, or even leftover pizza. Take a granola bar or apple with you if you're running late. Any breakfast is better than none.



Dear American Girl,

My friend keeps borrowing money and not paying me back. How can I ask her about it?

Money Help

Bring up this topic in a polite way, in case your friend doesn't realize how much she owes you. Try, "Hey, you've borrowed a lot of money from me, and I need it back." In the future, consider closing your wallet to this friend and others since loaning money can cause problems like this. If this friend or anyone asks to borrow money, you can say, "Sorry, but I don't have any extra cash." No explanation needed.



Dear American Girl,

I'm homeschooled. My friends think it's kind of weird, and I'm having a hard time fitting in.

Not Fitting

People often tease about things they don't understand. The next time someone brings this up, talk about what you like about home-school, such as getting individual help, learning in your own way, or having time to explore subjects you love. When people see how much you enjoy your school, they might come around. If the teasing continues, say, "We go to different schools. Big deal."



MORE HELP!

Dear American Girl,

My friend always needs my help in class. The teacher gives directions and shows us how to do something, and my friend is all, "So, HOW do you do that?" It's getting on my nerves!

Frustrated

Try this, with kindness in your voice: "You should ask Mrs. Welch about that. I know she'd want to help if you don't understand the assignment." Then go back to your work. Whether your friend is having real trouble in the class or is just not paying attention, this should help with the problem.



Dear American Girl,

I play the alto saxophone, and I hope to be a musician when I grow up. The trouble is, adults tell me that it won't happen and that I should have a more realistic goal. It stinks.

Do dreams come true?

Dreams do come true. Adults know that people don't always get what they want, so that's probably why they said what they said. But you

know what? They don't know the future. No one does. For now, you should work hard every day to be the best musician you can be. Whether or not music becomes your job, it can help to make you happy for the rest of your life. And that's a pretty great goal, too.



Dear American Girl,

I'm only 11, but my mom says I'm too old for toys. She wants me to give all my stuff to our



little neighbor. But I still like my toys! How do I tell my mom?

Good-bye toys?

Try, "Mom, I know I'm growing up. But I'm still a kid, too. I'd like to keep my toys a little longer because they make me happy." If she still says no, ask to keep a few special items. It could be that your mom is worried about clutter. If that's it, work with her on a plan to keep your toys organized and put away.



Dear American Girl,

I argue with my siblings all the time, and I end up storming off by myself. It's as if I can't stop myself from being moody.

Grumpy Girl

When you're growing up, it really can feel as if you have no control over your emotions. What you can control, though, is how you act when you feel them. When a fight is starting, say, "I've got to take a break," and go hang out in your room. Your anger usually will pass, and you'll be glad that you avoided the argument. Good luck.



even
MORE HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I'm moving—in the middle of the school year!!! And I'm so scared. What if the kids at my new school are mean? What if my teacher is scary? What if my new class has learned way more than I have? What if ...?

Nervous Nelly

It's easy to see why you're uneasy.

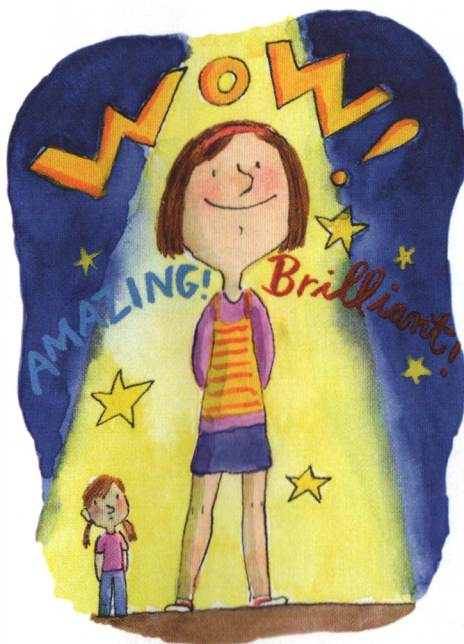
After all, a hard part of moving is dealing with the unknowns. But that's just it—it's all unknown. Your new classmates could be awesome. Your teacher might become your all-time favorite. Try not to imagine the worst. If things go badly at your new school, you'll deal with it then. But it does no good to worry about things that *might* happen. Instead, imagine things to look forward to.



Dear American Girl,

My sister is great at everything. Everyone always talks about how great she is. Whatever I do, I never do it as well as she does. It makes me feel awful.

second best



It's hard feeling as if you don't measure up. But the truth is, you're probably the only one who thinks that about you. The trick is finding your spot in the world. Figure out what YOU like and what you're good at, and put your energy toward that. Also, try to quit comparing yourself to your sister. When you start shining in your own way, people will notice, but even more important, you'll feel better about yourself.



Dear American Girl,

My best friend and I have been friends forever. But lately she has new interests and hasn't been hanging out with me as much. What did I do?

friend Help

Chances are, this has nothing to do with you. Friends sometimes grow apart over time, without fighting or having anything split them up. As sad as it can be, it's OK for this to happen. After all, you and your friend are changing. Let her go on her way, while you make memories with other friends. If your friend comes around later, great. If not, you can remember her as one of the many great friends you've had.



Advice from You

"If your friend is sad or having a really hard time with something, invite her over for a sleepover. That will almost always help take her mind off her problem for a while."

Shelby D.
Age 13, Texas

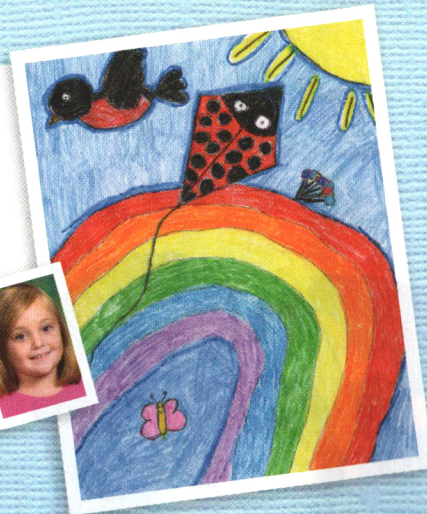
Need advice? Got advice? Write:
Help!

American Girl magazine

8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

Carly C., age 9, of New York made us smile when she sent this drawing of a kite flying in a sunny spring sky.

Go to americangirl.com/playmagazine to see even more kites in flight.



AG's Puzzle Page Answers:

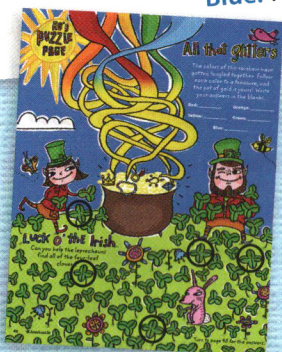
Red: Bracelet

Yellow: Crown

Orange: Necklace

Green: Diamond

Blue: Ring



Try this quick trick to help your doll hold one of the umbrellas from pages 40–41.

Slide the handle inside a rubber band, and slip the rubber band over the back of your doll's hand as shown.



Visit americangirl.com/playmagazine to send a rainy day e-card to a friend.

Sisters Grace and Katie R., ages 10 and 12, of Tennessee made the "Bright Writing" dry-erase boards from the September/October 2011 issue. Each girl made one for her room and another for their mom's office. Cute and colorful!



Behind the Scenes

Spring is in full bloom at *American Girl!*

G'day, Madeline!

Madeline F., age 10, of Florida will be joining the ranks of our "American Girls Around the World"—she's moving to Australia! Although she'll be going to another country, moving can be tough for any girl, even if it's just to a different neighborhood.



If you've moved, what wisdom can you share with readers who might be moving soon? Send your advice to the address on page 7, and you might be featured in an upcoming issue.

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Coming up in the May/June issue of *American Girl* magazine

Say, "Woof!"

See silly pet photos from girls like you.

Groom Your Room

Create cute crafts for your bedroom.

Sweet Pizza

Make a delicious dessert pizza!

Happy Trails

Read about a girl and her dad's amazing journey.



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